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TALKING POINTS FOR DCIIMPACT OF VICE PRESIDENT BUSH'S TRIP
ON EUROPEAN PUBLIC OPINION

A comparison of statements by West European leaders and media commentary before and during the Vice President's European tour shows that it apparently has been successful. Prior to the Vice President's departure:

- The media, particularly in West Germany and Italy, were headlining the Andropov proposal and Soviet "willingness" to compromise at Geneva as opposed to the US's "rigid" adherence to the zero option.
- West German Foreign Minister Genscher, Italian Foreign Minister Colombo, and even Prime Minister Thatcher spoke publicly of an "interim solution" which appeared to vary with the US negotiating position.
- In West Germany, SPD candidate Vogel elevated INF to the status of a major campaign issue.
- Many influential West European papers were editorializing that the US did not really want an INF agreement.

As the Vice President's trip comes to a close, however, the picture in Western Europe looks quite different.

- West German Chancellor Kohl's image has been enhanced while Vogel has greatly toned down his comments on INF.
- West European governments have stressed their solidarity with the US position on INF—a point echoed particularly by the Italian and French press.
- The media in general is heralding the new US "flexibility" and US willingness to consider seriously any proposal.
- European governments and the media have welcomed President Reagan's summit offer; even those papers (for example, The Guardian and Le Monde) which criticized the President's "open letter" to Andropov as a public relations effort, have commented favorably on the skillful US handling of the proposal.
- Papers in France, Italy, and West Germany have noted, and dismissed, Soviet criticism of the Bush trip and have remarked on US willingness to reach an accord with Moscow at Geneva. The West European media also have perceived that the USSR is now on the defensive and the US has taken the public relations initiative.

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